

**Public Comments as submitted to the Indiana Attorney General's Office.
Name, City and the comments made are posted in their entirety.**

Name:

Glenn Johnson

City:

Gary

State:

IN

Message:

I have an issue with the proposal; that is the clause that states that any land owned by GUEA near Gary Airport would be offered to the RDA first. I believe that all of the land should be made available to the citizens of Gary first. Actually, it should be left to the discretion of the Mayor and the City Council to decide what happens with land within the boundaries of Gary. It is our land, it should be our decision. I do not have a problem with oversight by the Indiana Attorney General but no one else should be involved.

Name:

Richard Barnes, Ph.D.

City:

Gary

State:

IN

Message:

We appeared at a local hearing on the disposition of this property and suggested that priority be given to residents of Gary who are first time homeowners. The homeownership variable plays an important part in reducing outmigration of citizens; increasing participation in civic programs as well as personal investment in the community. I would suggest that a list of priorities be developed that would allow for the sale of the property but also contribute to the stability of the city.

Once a program is established to develop a base of first time homeowners with the GUEA property, financial institutions can step in and help with financing. Since banks must show that they are proactive in granting mortgages to minorities and low-income families, they could play a positive role in meeting the objectives of this program as well as achieving their own goals.

Educational programs through Ivy Tech could be offered which would teach the new homeowners how to maintain, repair and improve their investment.

There is documented research showing the indirect relationship between home ownership and outmigration. Since the population of Gary has dropped below 100,000 for the first time in decades, homeownership of GUEA property would help stabilize the population of the City of Gary. I would also encourage the lending institutions to become involved in screening and granting approval to potential homeowners which would reduce speculation by investors and contribute to more rental housing.

The sale of the GUEA properties can make an important contribution of developing a social policy that benefits the residents and the City of Gary far into the future. It can be a win-win-win program if it is well planned, given constant oversight, and brings together governance that is fair, impartial, and evenly administered.

Name:
Gary Miller/Urban Faith Works

City:
Gary

State:
IN

Message:

GUEA Proposal: I agree that the state's attorney's office must provide oversight to any disposition of GUEA's assets. This proposal seems a little intense, yet probably the best that has been floated to date. My issue falls under the area of general disposal of assets of an enterprise zone organization. I was under the impression that such a disposal was to be at the benefit of the area that the organization was established to serve in the first place. While GUEA obviously overstepped its original parameters, there should still be provisions in any plan for disposal of assets for a majority of the benefit to go to the Emerson area, and especially to other 501(c)(3) organizations operating in and serving the Emerson community. Being president of such an organization, I have been told by various community leaders that we should be benefitting from said disposal of assets. I have, as of yet, still been unable to find someone who can direct us to the proper channel to initiate any such idea. Perhaps your office is the place to start...? Regardless of whether or not our organization benefits directly from the disposal of GUEA assets, I believe the law requires the major benefit of such a disposal to go to the Emerson community.

Name:
Harold J. Foster

City:
Gary

State:
IN

Message:

In general I believe that the sales and disposition of parcels to be a cumbersome process and will severely hamper the City's effectiveness in their ability to be responsive to potential developers and therefore will stifle economic development.

I'm not seeing the wisdom of having the U.S. attorney and the NRDA in the oversight process. Fundamentally, the NRDA is merely a funding authority for NWI projects. I don't believe it has the requisite skills or desire to act in an oversight capacity. Furthermore, the NRDA is in its infancy and does not have a clear plan on what properties they need to obtain or how the properties are to be utilized.

Finally, as a board member of the Gary International Airport Authority, I'm unclear as to why the airport would not have first claims to properties in the Airport Development Zone. Unlike the NRDA, we do have a strategic plan for properties in the ADZ; albeit long term.

Name:
nat mcknight

City:
Gary

State:
In

Message:

The propoded agreed order is not in the best intrest of thecommunity. The city can't handle what it already owns. It is not fairto the citizens and taxpayers of Gary.
Here is my draft proposal,

Excepting the residential parcels in Emerson; Every parcel controled by GUEA shall be sold On or about October 1st2007, via "commisioneers tax certificate" sale. Open the bidding at25% of the open taxes and let the buyers quiet the titles. If the RDAor the Airport wants property give them 70 days from April 1st 2007 toidentify the parcels they want and remove them from the sale list,allow them 70 additional days for public comment and due diligence. Ifthey decide to not accept the property return them to the sale list.

Emerson residential,

Allow the City of Gary or it's designated nominee until September 1st2008 to quiet the titles to insurable market standards. All parcels inEmerson must be under development by September 1st 2009 withresidential construction. Any parcels not under construction by givendate shall be sold at public auction on November 15th 2009 Proceedsfrom sale shall be directed to a new fire equipment fund.

The remedy for any defaults shall be public auction or tax sale.
submitted 2/22/07

Name:
Andy Young

City:
Wadsworth

State:
Il

Message:

There could probably be no more inefficient and ineffective way todispose of real estate. Why would you possibly choose the City of Garyto be the stewards of these properties? Should it come as any surprisethat we are facing a tax crisis when the City, which already holdstitle to over 7000 parcels is looking to increase their portfolio byanother 700 with the addition of the GUEA assets? The City claims thatthey have developers that need these properties for development. Ifthis is so, then surely these same developers would be eager to buythese properties if they were offered to the public for sale. How canwe ever expect to add assessed value to the tax rolls if great bulksof properties remain in tax-exempt status for one reason or another?All of the GUEA assets that are not part of immediate developmentplans of the City or other governmental bodies should be offered outfor immediate public sale.

Additionally, the City has been so busy licking their chops overthis acquisition, that they have never taken the time to assess theliability that they are assuming. For example, one of the properties,a collapsing 10 storey structure at 574 Monroe, will need to bedemolished immediately to protect the City from the liability itrepresents. Demolition costs for this structure would likely bebetween \$500,000.00 and one million dollars. The property that it sitson is worth no more than \$15,000.00. The City will therefore go in thewhole over a half a million dollars on that one property alone. Thisis not the only property that has a structure that needs eitherimmediate demolition or other costly attention. There will be no netgain to the City by acquiring these properties. It will however ensurethat these properties remain off of the tax rolls for several moreyears. GUEA purchased most of these around 1999. While they haveaccrued taxes since 2003 when they lost their tax-exempt status, theCity has already entered into an agreed order to wipe the taxes cleanby taking ownership. For the most part these properties were manyyears tax-delinquent before GUEA purchased them at the tax sale, theyhave generated no tax revenue all of the time GUEA owned them, andthey will surely generate no tax revenue during the time which theCity has them in their possession. This means that for 10 years theseproperties will have produced no tax revenue. And is it any wonderthat we are facing this tax dilemma? We should be able to look to theState and the City to solve this tax crisis, not further complicate itwith a deal such as this that is obviously not in the best interest ofthe taxpayers.

Name:
L'Sana DJahspora

City:
Gary

State:
IN

Message:
Attorney General Carter:

Due to the relative lack of information or notice of local meetings during its recent transition phase, it would be only fitting to have more open and local discussion on the matter of its disposal of its properties.

It would be very constructive to allow proposals from local residents for use of particular properties, and awarding based on general benefit to the community and ability to carry out one's proposal.

Your transfer proposal is an arrangement made without the general input of the Gary community, and in recent weeks when it has been mentioned it is in terms of a done deal. I do not believe many are aware of the email "comment period."

Name: Kristopher Krouse, Executive Dir. Shirley Heinze Land Trust

My name is Kristopher Krouse and I am the Executive Director of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Inc. . Our organization preserves and restores natural areas in Northwest Indiana. I am writing to inquire about two parcels previously owned by the Gary Urban Enterprise Association (GUEA).

Since the mid-1980's our organization has been acquiring property in Caldwell's 8th Addition and Gary City Estates within the city of Gary, IN. We currently own over 250 lots in these platted and undeveloped areas identified as Ivanhoe South. The area encompasses a pristine dune and swale natural area that provides habitat for the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly. We still have a few remaining lots to acquire for the acquisition efforts in this area, which include the following two lots previously owned by GUEA:

Caldwell's 8th Addition
Tax I.D. number: 00125-42-0011-0010
Block 2, Lot 11

Gary City Estates 2nd Addition
Tax I.D. number: 001-25-43-0100-0009
Block W, Lot 9

It is our hope that the Attorney General's Office or the City of Gary will donate these two properties to Shirley Heinze Land Trust. They hold little, if any, value from a development standpoint, and are invaluable to the flora and fauna in Northwest Indiana.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Name:
Don Radulovich

City:
Gary

State:
In

Message:

Give homeowners who live next to GUEA properties 1st choice to own them.

END